(a) whether any request has been received for according permission for diverting 52.75 acres of land in order to construct reservoir across Mathadivagu in Nizamabad district in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the time by which permission will be granted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir; proposal for diversion of 57.25 hectares of forest land for construction of reservior across Mathadivagu in Nizamabad district in Andhra Pradesh was received by the Ministry.

(b) After careful consideration of the proposal of State Government, the Central Government has accorded in-principle approval on 09.09.1998 for diversion of 57.25 ha. of forest land for construction of reservior across Mathadivagu in Nizamabad district in Andhra Pradesh. After receipt of compliance report from the State Government on fulfilment of the conditions of in-principle approval, formal approval will be issued under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

Creating Consumer's Confidence in Supply of Essential Goods

1431. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state;

(a) what steps are being taken to create consumer's confidence in the supply of essential goods at reasonable prices;

(b) whether Government are contemplating to constitute a panel for monitoring prices of essential good; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) The Government has accorded the highest priority to the control and stabilisation of prices of essential commodities. Apart from certain long term measures to increase the production of essential goods, imports of items which are in short supply like pulses and onion have been placed under OGL at zero percent import duty and duty on the import of edible oils has been reduced to 15 percent from 25 percent in order to augment the total availability of these items. Export of onion has been banned. Some of the essential commodities like rice, wheat, palmolein and kerosene are also supplied through the outlets of public distribution system at below market prices. Stringent actions are being taken against hoarders, black marketeers and other indulging in unfair trade practices under the Essential Commodities Act and Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act by the State/UT Governments.

The Government has also taken action to Supply onions at Delhi at a subsidised rate of Rs. 10 per kg. From 14.7.98 through public distribution Agencies. Similarly, subsidised Supply of essential Items are also being undertaken by some State Governments through the PDS and cooperative outlets.

(b) and (c) Government has decided to constitute a Special Cell under the Cabinet Secretariat to monitor and analyse prices data and trend of essential commodities. It would also service the Cabinet Committee on Prices which would take decisions on imports and exports of essential Commodities. The Cell will established mechanisms for obtaining crop price and production data from various centres in the country and share these informations suitably with the States.